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ABSTRACT

"Options in Education" is a radio news program which focuses on issues and developments in education. This transcript of the first show contains discussions of college enrollment, the controversy over standardized testing, hyperactivity in school children, the rash of teacher strikes, and how to become a professional golfer. Participants in the program are John Herrow and Wendy Blair, moderators; Stephen Bailey, American Council on Education; Bernard McKenna and Terry Herndon, National Education Association; David Nolan, Educational Testing Service; August Steinhilber, National School Boards Association; Lonna Naegel, Public Station KSAC; Peter Schrag, author of "The Myth of the Hyperactive Child"; and Susan Stamberg, National Public Radio. (JM)

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Options in Education

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OPTIONS IN EDUCATION

1st SHOW

November 3, 1975

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

National Public Radio

JM: John Merrow, Moderator
WB: Wendy Blair, Moderator
SB: Dr. Stephen Bailey, Vice President, The American Council on Education
BM: Bernard McKenna, National Education Association
DN: David Nolan, Educational Testing Service
TH: Terry Herndon, Executive Director, National Education Association
AS: August Steinhilber, Executive Director, National School Boards Association
LN: Lonna Naegel, Public Station, KSAC
PS: Peter Schrag, author, The Myth of the Hyperactive Child
SS: Susan Stamberg, All Things Considered, National Public Radio

WB: I'm Wendy Blair, with NPR's Options in Education.

(hold that line, music)

WB: Options in Education is a news magazine about all the issues and developments in education, from the ABCs of primary education to the alphabet soup of government programs. If you've ever been to school, we have something that will interest you!

(music, up and out)

WB: This, the first issue of Options in Education, contains some good news about college enrollment, the controversy over standardized testing, a look at hyperactivity in school kids, an explanation of the rash of teacher strikes, and a short lesson in how to become, (of all things, a professional golfer.) So please stay with us.

(button: Ann Landers)

WB: This year at least 10 million Americans, young and old, are spending the money and, they hope, avoiding ignorance. They are going to college. In recorded numbers, and that's good news for most----but not all----colleges. The jump in enrollment is somewhat of a surprise, because lots of people had predicted that enrollments would decline. Dr. Stephen Bailey, vice president of the American Council on Education, explained the college enrollment picture to reporter John Merrow.

OS 803 004

OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is an electronic weekly magazine devoted to coverage of news, features, policy & people in the field of education. The program is available for broadcast to the 181 member stations of National Public Radio.

The Executive Producer is John Merrow. The Producer is Midge Hart. The Associate Producer is Jo Ellyn Rackleff, and the Co-Host is Wendy Blair.

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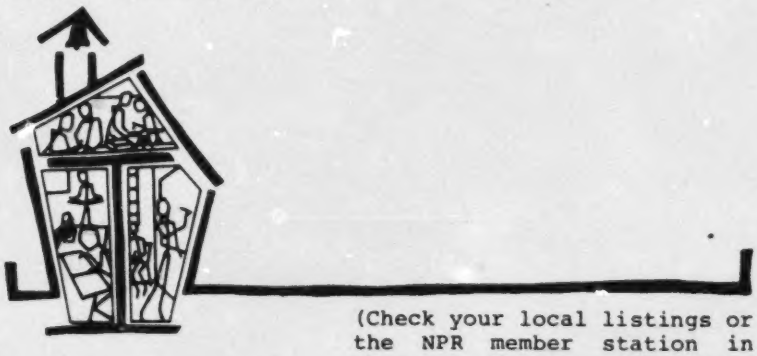

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JM: Our subject is college enrollments and now for a number of years people have been making gloomy predictions and forecasts about the trouble that colleges are going to be in as enrollments start to decline. Some people are saying that decline would have started already. Has it?

SB: No, it has not and it is going up. As far as we can make out it will continue to go up for several years. The rate of increase has started to turn down but it will not be until 1982 or 1983 that enrollments will fall even to the point where they are now.

JM: Well now lets find out where they are now. How many people are going to college in this country right now?

SB: Well, if you are talking about those who are actually enrolled in degree credit institutions -- that is where they are not just going to take a course in basket weaving but are actually going to take credits towards academic degrees -- you are talking about 10 million students who are enrolled in such courses and such institutions. Now this is roughly double what it was ten years ago.

JM: What is it up from last year? It is up from last year?

SB: It is up about 4 per cent from last year.

JM: Ten million Americans are going to college, Steve. Maybe you can give us some picture of who those 10 million Americans are. And let me start with a specific question regarding full-time versus part-time students. Do you have a break-down on how many of those 10 million people are going to school full-time?

SB: Well, roughly half of them.

JM: The part-time necessary--

SB: The part-time students represent about 50 per cent of the total enrollment in this country, at this time.

JM: Now that is a tremendous change over the past ten years.

SB: An enormous change. Just an enormous change.

JM: It used to be that people in academic institutions looked on part-time students as some kind of pathological behavior and that students ought to go to full-time. What is wrong with them? Why aren't they in school full time? What has happened? Why this change?

SB: Well, a great many things have happened. One is with the end of the Vietnam war a lot of people decided they didn't have to go full-time in order to stay out of the draft. A great many people who are presently working are understanding increasingly the importance of a college education from the standpoint of future job options, opportunities. Therefore even though they work they will go back to school part time. Housewives who find their kids are now, say in kindergarten or school half days finally find time on their hands and often times would like to go back and finish a college degree or an associate in arts degree. So a very substantial increase is taking place in the number of part-time students.

JM: I will bet there are a number of people who are working and going back part-time and won't go full-time because they don't want to give up their jobs for fear they might not get a job again when they graduate.

SB: Just right. Just right.

JM: Let's break that 10 million number down another way. How many of those people are going to private institutions as opposed to public institutions? Do you have some figure on that?

SB: Yes I have figures on this. Roughly 20 per cent of the total enrollment of 10 million -- this means roughly 2 million -- are

in private institutions and 8 million are in public institutions.

JM: Now the enrollment figures this year, are they up for both public institutions and private institutions?

SB: Yes, they are. At the time quite dramatic. If you want exact figures here I can tell you that in two-year public institutions in 1967 had about 1,300,00 enrollments. This year, over 3,153,000. Now this is a doubling in eight years time. More than doubling in eight years time and this is a very substantial change in the pattern of attendance at our institutions of higher education.

JM: Now, Steve, you said in a couple of years, five six years, enrollments are projected to go down. Now when they start going down, what is going to happen to the private institutions? Their share has been declining every year, anyway. Will it continue to decline or will the decline increase?

SB: John, you make a difference between declining as a percentage and actual decline in numbers and the private institutions are still, you know, way ahead of where they were ten, fifteen years ago.

JM: But when the pie stops getting bigger --

SB: When it stops getting bigger a good many things can happen and I am not sure anybody has a crystal ball that is clear enough. Let me give you an example of the options. We have had recent discussions of what is called the Sibling Overlap Problem. All this means is, are there two or three kids in the family close enough together so it is an enormous strain on the family to send all three of them, say to a private college. We are right in the middle of the worst Sibling Overlap Problem this nation has ever had.

JM: It never knew it had a problem until --

SB: It didn't know it had a problem. All right. But it does have. Now by the beginning of the 80's that Sibling Overlap Problem is going to change and there are going to be fewer kids, better spaced. Therefore as enrollments begin to fall off, because, just in demographic terms, fewer kids are going to reach the age of 18. You are going to have an increase in the number of kids who are in families of, say, two kids instead of three or four kids and who are spaced out. Therefore it may well be easier for parents to send kids in 1983 to private institutions instead of public institutions.

JM: By "spaced out" you weren't reflecting on the kids themselves, you meant the number of years between them?

SB: I appreciate the correction.

JM: Take that 10 million again. Ten million Americans who are now in colleges and talk about them by sex.

SB: Well, it is about five to four. That is five men are in college for every four women.

JM: But the number of women is increasing?

SB: Yes, it is.

JM: And faster than the number of men?

SB: Yes, that is true, too. Let me give you exact figures. In 1954, one million nine women were in colleges and universities. Now today there are four million in colleges and universities. Whereas in 1954 there were three million men as against five miliion men, today. So there has been less than a doubling in the number of men and more than a doubling in the number of women. Which indicates a kind of catching up.

JM: The other breakdown I am interested in, Steve, is a question of

older people going back to college. Now that is hard data to get but do you have any figures to indicate how many of the ten million Americans in college are, let's say, over thirty?

SB: I don't have those figures immediately available but I can tell you this, that the number of adults going back to college is very substantial and is increasing all the time. Let me give you one statistic that may surprise you. I told you the great increase in enrollment was at the two-year community college level. Do you know what the average age of the community college student is in this country?

JM: No.

SB: Twenty-seven. Which means if you take the number that are 18, 19, 20 years old, you have got to have a whopping number that are 30, 35, 40, 50, 60 in order to come out with an average figure of twenty-seven.

JM: So a lot of older people are back in school?

SB: A very substantial number.

JM: Will American colleges and universities be able to rely on those older bodies to fill the empty spaces that are created as the number of 18 year olds drops?

SB: I wish I could give you a general answer to this but I have to give specific answers. If you are talking about the community college or a four-year college in an urban area, where old people can get to college very easily by taking a bus or by taking a car, that is one thing. But if you take a look at a college, a university like Ohio University -- not Ohio State but Ohio University -- which is in a very rural section of Ohio they are down in full-time enrollments now from 20,000 just three years ago to 12,000 right now. I don't see any period in the world of older people being able to make up that difference. It is inacessible.

JM: So the college has to be where the older people live.

SB: This is just right.

JM: George Bonham said when speaking, he said of the 10 million people on American college campus about 2 million of them don't even belong there. What is your response?

SB: I don't agree with George on this. I don't quite know how he sets up a measure for who belongs and who doesn't belong. I will only say this, that with 3,000 institutions of higher education in this country -- and that doesn't even include the proprietary schools, the schools for business profit, barber schools, and business schools, just the basic not-for-profit institutions, there are 3,000 of them. Surely there ought to be room for institutions of higher education who try to make up for the deficiencies in K through 12, that an attempt to help adults or young people for that matter, to catch up on english or mathematics or other coping skills that they need. You know, I just don't believe they do not belong.

JM: I think Mr. Bonham might have meant a number of them were trying to avoid a sour economy and some others may be just poorly matched.

SB: What is wrong with trying to avoid a sour economy? Isn't it better to be learning and improving one's self and fitting one's self more skillfully for life and for coping by going to school than it is to hang around the corner drug store, or wait to get into trouble?

JM: That is a whole other debate and I hope you will come back and we can go into that another time. Thank you very much.

SB: You bet.

WB: Steve Bailey of the American Council on Education, explaining the unexpected rise in college enrollment. George Bonham, whom Bailey and Merrow referred to, is editor-in-chief of Change Magazine, which covers higher education.

(button: what do you like about school? LUNCH)

WB: Kids like other things about school besides lunch, of course. But one part of school most kids don't like are the tests they have to take. However student preference really doesn't count for much, and in fact this generation of school kids is the most tested ever. Standardized testing often begins in pre-school, and by high school graduation American students have sat through literally hundreds of hours of standardized testing. Last year alone, 200 million achievement test forms were filled out, and there are only 47 million kids in our schools. In 1974 the two biggest Testing Companies grossed 65 million dollars, and one Test Scoring Company grossed another 50 million dollars. Growing protest has accomplained the growth in gross receipts, however. One educational magazine, the National Elementary Principal, has emerged as the spear carrier, devoting two recent issues to testing in America. In one article Bernard McKenna of the National Education Association describes new testing programs in Bakersfield, California, and Royal Oak, Michigan. In those cities, (McKenna says) new superintendents brought in new intensive testing programs, in an attempt to regain popular support for the schools. McKenna studied the two situations closely and concludes that both efforts were misguided.

JM: Well, now, what happened in Royal Oak, Michigan and Bakersfield, California?

BM: The thing that happened there was that large scale testing programs were brought in without teacher involvement, pretty muchly, mandated by the central office. Principals were told that their school buildings would be tested at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the year and of appropriate growth wasn't shown it was possible the principal might find himself doing something different the next year.

JM: Something of a threat?

BM: To put it mildly, yes. And not all principals were threatened. Some of them continued to do the very best job they knew how and advised their teachers that that's all they were going to do and went about their work. Others were threatened, and there were a good many of those, told the teachers to teach to the tests. Some teachers were told not to bother with those students that probably wouldn't show much growth because there had to be pay dirt in this and they better work with those students where it looked as though they were going to make the most growth. That was one thing that happened. In some schools the principal actually took pieces out of the tests and gave them to the teachers and said, "Now don't teach these exactly but, you know, change them some, but be sure you get across these things because these are the things that students are going to be tested on." Now that may be good what is called criterian reference testing or objective reference testing but we think it is very poor education.

JM: And what happened at the end of the year, did the scores rise dramatically, or is this a new day in Bakersfield and Royal Oak?

BM: In neither place did the scores rise dramatically as far as we could tell. What happened was that students became frustrated, they in some places, particularly in the early elementary grades after they had been tested week after week for seven or eight weeks, some children cried when they came into the classrooms and saw that the desks were another day pulled apart and they were going to be tested. Some children got to a point where they refused to do the test. Gerald Zacharias put it very well when he said that we should not retreat to catch-phrases like: I know these tests are not good but they are all we have. There are many ways to assess children's competence and some of them may not look very scientific or numerical but they are known to most teachers and principals too --

JM: Like what?

BM: Such as using the result of students' work for evaluation. The very products that the students produce. Such as interviewing the students. Such as having students evaluate each other or where there are a lot of them. They may not end up in precise numbers by which you can compare one student to the other but we are increasingly learning it is not helpful to compare a student with other students. We ought to compare him with where he might go in terms of a full range of educational objectives.

JM: Yes, but you know very well there is tremendous pressure from within a community to find out how the community stacks up against neighboring communities or how one school stacks up against another school. I mean there is tremendous pressure to use standardized tests. Let me ask you to imagine yourself as a superintendant going to a community and saying, "Folks, I am not going to do standardized tests in this school district or any school district. They are not any good. They are harmful, in fact." Imagine how long you would have your job. Or do you know superintendents who have done that?

BM: I think the superintendant would have his job if he did a good job of preparing the community for a variety of alternatives in standardized tests and I would suggest that not only should school administrators get busy and teachers and others, too, in re-educating the community about alturnitives to standardized tests and about the dangers of them as they are, but that the testing industry -- educational testing service and others of the Big Six, and professors in colleges and universities, the psychometrists, the psychologists who have developed some of these tools, that they too cease and desist, as Gerald Zacharias says, with standardized tests as they now exist and get themselves busy at making better alternatives. Most of us would agree the alternatives some of them are not very good, but they at least are not as harmful as the typical standardized test.

JM: Now one of the reasons tests are though of as harmful or alleged to be harmful is that they don't test for a lot of characteristics, traits, talents that in fact we do value. Like creativity.

BM: They don't test the most important cognative things because even if you stay away from creativity, in the cognative areas the ability of a student to analyze, to synthecize, to draw generalizations and to be able to apply those generalizations to new phenomena are hardly tested at all, even in the most sophisticated standardized tests. They still are pretty much recall kinds of instruments.

JM: What would you suggest to parents listening to this, what would you suggest they do in their own community about testing? Do you suppose they even know what goes on in the schools providing standardized testing?

BM: Probably in many communities, high percentages of parents don't know. They assume, like they assume when they read the Consumers Report in relation to buying a refrigerator, they assume the numerical values on the tests are highly precise and that they represent accurate representations of their students' achievement and ability and they don't do either of those things very well.

JM: You are fighting an up-hill battle, I can see that.

BM: I don't think so. I believe that the standardized testing movement which is probably at its zenith, today, is qualitatively bankrups and I think that increasing numbers of professionals are getting to know that. When you look at the work of people at MIT and at Harvard, Gerald Zacharis I have mentioned, at MIT, there are several others that are working in this area; at Princeton a psychologist named Caymen has taken strong exception to the use of intelligence tests. I think it is only a matter of time that the testing movement will see a very rapid decline and we will begin to see more constructive and useful alternatives. It is up hill right now.

JM: Mac, I asked you earlier what you would suggest partents would ask about the testing in their schools. I don't think I pushed you enough for an answer on that.

BM: I said I think they ought to ask how the results of the tests are used to improve the instruction of their individual children.

JM: Do you think teachers should be involved in the selection of tests?

BM: Absolutely. In fact if teachers were involved in the selection of standardized tests pretty broadly there probably would be many fewer. There probably wouldn't be any in lots of places because teachers in the testimony we have taken all across the country -- and I worked with a national task force on testing for three years and we took testimony from a broad range of professionals -- they had told us that the tests are of almost no help to them in either improving their instructional techniques or in diagnosing individual learning difficulties and so if you were to ask teachers many of them would say they are a waste of their time and the children's time.

JM: Are the tests expensive? Does the school district spend much of its budget on tests?

BM: Of course the test booklets cost money and then there is the cost of computerizing the results. Those things are expensive but what is more expensive are the man days that teachers spend administering them. In Royal Oak, Michigan, it was estimated that to administer one test in one high school, in cost of teacher time alone, was $150,000. And those test scores were sent out in the mail to the parents of 2200 students in that high school with almost no explanation. Only twenty parents made inquiries about the test results and teachers almost universally said that they made no use of the test results.

JM: Why not? Did they get them back in time? It seems if you got them back right away --

BM: There were a lot of reasons. Partially because of what was in the test, the way the tests were constructed, you cannot analyze the learning problems students have from them. That is one thing. A second was, yes, in that particular situation they didn't get them back until almost the beginning of the second semester when they would have a whole group of different students so the test results they got were for students who were with somebody else.

JM: So you are saying parents then ought to ask not only how much the tests cost but they also ought to ask how much time will they take from their kids' normal school time, and you are saying that they ought to ask what are the tests for in the first place and they ought to ask what the results mean and how the results will be used in relationship to the school's programs.

WB: Bernard McKenna of the National Education Association, talking with John Merrow. I mentioned that protests and gross receipts were going up. About the only thing that is declining are the tests scores themselves. The SATs and other college entrance tests, the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and now a study of our ability to cope in a complex society----all these test scores seem to be going down. Next week on Options in Education we'll have a look at those test results, and we think you'll be surprised to learn that, despite our lower scores <u>we seem to be getting smarter</u>.

(button)

WB: In doing research for that piece on testing, Merrow talked with David Nolan of the Educational Testing Service. They ended up talking about a completely unrelated topic, as you will hear.

JM: How in this life does one learn to become a professional golfer?

DN: Well, there are a lot of ways and I guess probably the first question is, how does one ever develop a desire to become a professional golfer.

JM: You can answer your own question.

DN: It is obviously irdividuals who enjoy playing golf get led into the idea that perhaps being a professional golfer would be a career for them. The really important thing to remember about professional golf is that fellows we see on the tour on television on the various golf shows and so forth, are really a very small percentage of the professional golfers, in our country and in the world for that matter.

JM: Not everybody is a Jack Nicklous.

DN: I think that is safe to say. Including you and me. But if you really look at the professional golfer who runs a golf shop at a golf club or at a public golf course, most of the men who are doing that are professional golfers and are members of the Professional Golfers Association.

JM: The PGA?

DN: The PGA. And they are really small businessmen. Some of them are pretty good size businessmen. I mean they run pretty good size businesses.

JM: So how does one learn to become a professional golfer?

DN: Mostly in the past it has been a matter of being apprentice to other professional golfers and so on but just recently now, in fact this year, the first year we are doing it, or that the PGA is doing it and I work with them on this program, they have begun a four-year bachelors degree program for individuals who want to become professional golfers and this program is being offered at Ferris State, a college in Big Rapids, Michigan. We have got fifty students there this year who will go through a four year program at the end of which they will receive a bachelor's degree in business, in marketing, because that truly reflects what these professional golfers at the clubs do.

JM: They don't spend the four years playing golf?

DN: No, as a matter of fact they spend the four years studying accounting, tax law, personnel problems, marketing and so forth.

JM: What about golf?

DN: During the summer they will serve a kind of apprenticeship at golf clubs around the country. The PGA will identify places and place them ar these clubs where they will work with a Class A pro at one of these clubs and learn something about how to run a gold club and how to handle yourself as a professional golfer at a club. They will also have special workshops during that period of time where they will undergo instruction in how to teach golf and how to repair golf clubs, which is the traditional thing that a professional golfer originally did. He was a manufacturer of golf clubs and equipment. In fact years ago the golf balls were in fact hand made, and professional golfers were the people who made them.

JM: Is that right?

DN: The marvelous thing is why many, many years ago golf was played by very few people. That was because there were very few golf balls around.

JM: Now as one wants to learn to be a professional golfer, is Ferris State the only place to do it?

DN: Ferris State is the only place in the country right now where this four-year program is being offered and we are talking about maybe two or three other places in the country where we will

develop similar programs, but Ferris is the only one at the present time.

JM: When you first mentioned professional golfers you said men. Later you said individuals and then students. Are there women involved?

DN: There is one woman involved in the program at Ferris State.

JM: If you graduate from Ferris State with honors, does that mean you are likely to be a Jack Nicklous?

DN: Being a professional golfer you are expected to be able to play golf well but you are not expected to have to be able to compete on the tour, or have an average score of par or below. As a matter of fact there is a playing test that you have to pass in order to become a member of the PGA.

JM: Is there a playing test for admission to Ferris State?

DN: Yes as a matter of fact they ask that individuals with handicaps of -- your handicap must be below eight to enter the program.

JM: So at Ferris State anyway there is a new meaning for the term "Handicapped student." It has to do with your golf score. Thank you very much, David.

WB: Learning To...is a regular feature of Options in Education. Next week we'll be learning to repair a telephone, including the problems a telephone repairperson has with some telephone repairmen.

(button: Strikes)

WB: As you know, a lot of children have missed a lot of school this fall. Theres been a record number of strikes, 160 of them, involving nearly 150,000 teachers. The average strike lasted three days, and the longest, in Wilmington, Delaware, went on for six weeks. Terry Herndon is the executive director of the National Education Association, which, along with the American Federation of Teachers, represents most American public school teachers. Herndon discusses the wave of strikes with August Steinhilber, assistant executive director of the National School Boards Association, and John Merrow, calling attention to the number of teachers who did not strike.

TH: Talking about strikes it is always difficult to --. On September 1 we had 2,000 situations where contracts has expired and new agreements has not been reached, so in light of the number of problems situations that existed there was a small number of strikes. In a more normal year with 2,000 unsettled urits there would probably be many more strikes than we have had this year.

JM: Well, why were there so many unsettled contracts?

TH: Well, the cost of school districts have gone up as every other organizations, institution and family in America. The schools are impacted by inflation. Citizens that have been affected by inflation and further having very real fears of economic disruption because of widespread layoffs in their community have tried to conserve dollars for the maintenance of their life style in buying the commodities they want each day, so you create an anti-tax pressure, or a tax hostility. So public institutions like schools have been among those most hardpressed to get additional revenue to deal with inflation.

JM: So money has been the issue in these strikes, then?

AS: Well, yes, and there have been other issues in the strikes because while the economy has one effect with respect to the school system and the teachers, there was another kind of effect that developed. That is where management, because it was caught in this kind of fiscal crunch, if you will, started making demands at the bargaining table as well. So we saw quite a few instances where previously

bargained items which were in previous contracts, we were in effect asking for review of those and deletion of those kinds of provisions. Especially with respect to the fringe benefits, which have all of a sudden become to mushroom and have a direct impact on the school system which they have not been able to plan for really adequately.

JM: So you are saying that when the teachers came in and asked for more the boards came back and said, "Well as a matter of fact, you can have less"?

AS: That is quite true. In a number of instances.

TH: Most all the probelms are economically induced, though. Even though they were not all salaries?

JM: Well, in a situation like that who causes the strike?

AS: The question on impasse is always, if both parties are bargaining in good faith what you end up with is both sides saying they cannot go back to their principals with an agreement and both sides finally end up by walking away from the bargaining table.

JM: So they are both striking, in effect?

AS: Technically, if the union walks out first it is a strike and if management walks out first it is a lockout.

JM: Some of the people I talked with at the NEA called them school board strikes not teacher strikes and people at the AFT called them defensive strikes. I am interested in that question of why the strikes occur. I understand the reasons are economic but whether the school boards are pushing teachers into a striking position.

TH: When you are talking about a strike you really encounter the reality of the old addage of where you stand has a great deal to do with where you sit and the whole process of encollective bargaining is the reconciliation of what might very well be dichotomous points of view. The perspectives are different. That is what creates the need for the process. Now from our view, in most of those situations, and we have indicated out of 2,000 unsettled situations we had 140, 150 strikes. School boards and teachers were able to come to a constructive dialogue to find the best way to deal with a bad situation. Now like everybody else I suppose in a conflict we tend to think we were reasonably and place blame elsewhere. I am sure the other party perceives they were reasonable and they place blame on us. But the fact is we had a different view as to how to resolve the situation and we had a confrontation, we had a strike and those pressures led to resolution.

JM: I am interested in that question of placing blame. Do either of you have any particular feelings on how the public views strikes by teachers?

AS: Well, if you were to ask me that same question approximately a year ago I would have said the public really doesn't care. The public, speaking from the board's viewpoint, the public does not really place much pressure on the school system during a period of a strike. Traditionally in years past when the school system went out on strike, yes, you had some parents who were working mothers, kinds of concerned: let's get those children back in school in September. That kind of pressure was placed on the board. But recently I am seeing a change in the posture of the public. The public is getting more adamant, more concerned about strikes.

TH: Well I think if you look at the theoretical notion that the school board represents the public, I have always found it fascinating that in more strikes than not, the public ranges somewhere between indifference to support of the teachers and active vigorous support for the school board's position seems to characterize the minority of the strikes. Now I think we are getting into developing public response but the response to me seems more often to be in response to the inconvenience of the

strike rather than taking a position on the merits of either party in the dispute.

JM: Well, doesn't it add up to the same thing?

TH: No. The typical public response is, we want this thing settled. They don't come out as an advocate for the teacher view or for the board view far too often their position is a pox on both your houses, which is not good for the school as an insititution. But the public puts the premium on settlement and keep in school.

JM: Isn't it possible that you are facing a real backlash, that the teachers in NEA are facing a real backlash from the public that is fed up with strikes of police, firemen, sanitation workers?

TH: I read about that backlash when the columnists write about it, I see the editorial opinion about the reality of the backlash. I hear Congressmen talking about the backlash as an excuse for not doing some things that they know they ought to do but in our day-to-day activitu with local teachers' associations in local school districts we don't see the reality of that backlash. Now I think if the media continues to mount the conversation about the backlash, public officials are going to respond as though it were real. We talk about 160 strikes and disregard the fact that there are between ten and fifteen thousand operating school districts in the country. Those over ten thousand being very small but at a base level you have ten thousand real school districts. That means 9,950 of them did not experience a strike. So it is very theoretical issue for the masses of the public.

AS: I am not quite sure it is a complete theoretical issue because we have been watching the polls like every one else and noticed that a year ago one of the polsters came out with the statement to the effect that some 65 to 70 per cent of the American public would have no opposition to the right to strike for public employees. Yet we saw a similar kind of survey within the last thirty days come up with a figure of about only 45 per cent would not object, which shows a definite public reaction. Whether or not they are relating to any one strike in their districts or looking at a problem such as New York City and saying they don't want that kind of development, here. I think the cause and effect relationship may not be shown but there has been an effect.

JM: Terry.

TH: I would agree with that, that if you poped the question to the public: How do you feel about a teachers' strike, or how you fell about legalizing a strike, you get a negative response. How do you feel about a tax increase? You get a negative response. But the issue in and of itself is far more complicated than that simple question and you have the matter of whether it is a casual response or an emotional kind of thing. I mean when you talk about a backlash, that connotes many things to me. That connotes a deep abiding aggitation among the people, to me. I don't believe that is real.

AS: I was going to make a comment on a slightly different thing with respect to the strike situation. That is, the numbers, in and of itself, begin multiplying. Meaning that while -- when you had a very few number of public employees strike, you know, you might have had a small number of individuals being concerned, but as the numbers begin to grow you are having a cummulative effect now on the public and I think that is one of the things we have to face, that there is a cumulative effect. And that cumulative effect has another kind of comment that school boards have to face outside of the realm of collective bargaining and that is we are -- even in our relationship with Congress, we are being called: Well, isn't this the bottomless pit, that all money is just going to fall through. If we permit any amount of money to go to education it will authmatically be used up, using the old cliche of given time and space, we will find it if permitted to do so. So you are having another kind of reaction to this that we faced on the day-to-day operation even in Congress.

JM: You mean any attempts to lobby, to increase the federal contribution from, say, 7 per cent to 33 per cent, as the NEA would like?

AS: This is one of the reasons, when we periodically talk about general aid to education versus categorical aid, you will have members of congress say: We will support categorical aid because that moeny is not gobbles up in the collective bargaining process. We know that will go toward the education of specific youngsters. However, as you -- as they usually call it, "stump and run money" you put it on the stump, general aid that the school district can pick up and use at its discretion, that money is going to be wasted because it will be just put on the table for the collective bargaining agreement and it will be used up and there will be no increase in the productivity at the school level. Now that is a reaction. Whether it is correct or not it is a thing that, in my position representing the National School Boards Association, makes it very difficult for us to make requests to the federal government for further assistance.

JM: So it is not just public perception, it is Congressional perception, then?

AS: That is right.

JM: Venture, fi you will, both of you, some predictions on what is likely to happen in labor-management negotiations in education for the rest of the year. I know there are a lot of contracts that are expired and new contracts have not been signed. How many and what is the likelihood of more strikes? Terry?

TH: Well, our data suggests there are 800 school districts where teachers and school boards are bargaining and there is no contract in effect at the present time. There will be some additional strikes. I would guess them to be fiew, because those districts by and large are district where teachers and their school board have a fairly reasonable relationship, or a relationship of mutual respect or else the strike would have occurred, already. A place where teachers are willing to work for six weeks, seven weeks, eight weeks without a contract while they continue negotiations, indicate the negotiations are on a high plane, there are real problems but the parties believe that each will participate in good faith trying to find a solution to those problems.

JM: Gus?

AS: I would tent to agree that the number if strikes for the rest of this year will probably be small. There will be some. Some of them may deteriorate in the negotiations, but the normal time, if I can call it normal time, for the impasse to really strike -- the cause of the strike is a fall and school is open for the first time.

JM: In the strikes which took place this fall, who's won? Gus?

AS: I don't know whether you can ever in a collective bargaining sense, say who's won and who's lost because each side will bring out the statistics to prove his or her own case. I would contend that even where strikes have been settled, the awards in terms of increases in salary adn fringe benefits have been less than they have in the past. Even though the NEA and its affiliates have contended that teachers have had to start from a further position back in the economy and that there is a catch-up process involved. Nevertheless, you know, from what we have seen, the awards have been far under what they have been in previoua years, where a strike has occurred.

JM: Terry, who has won in the strikes that have taken place so far?

TH: To put it in quantitative terms I don't think anybody ever wins a strike. I think both parties to the bargaining have an interest in having a resolution of the dispute and when the dispute is resolved, from that point of view, everybody wins. There is an addage in the labor relations business that a good settlement is one that everybody is a little bit unhappy with because if one party is euphoric the other must be in despair. I think that characterizes the strike settlements we have has this year. We has a disagreement, a strike insued, we reached agreement, the institution reopened. Everybody benefitted from the reopening.

JM: Is it fair to say children are the losers in every strike situation?

TH: No, I don't think that is fair.

JM: Why don't you think that is fair?

TH: I think in many, many cases, teachers are on strike to resolve disputes and to achieve changes in conditions that they think impair their ability to teach. Now we could assume that sometimes they are wrong and sometimes they are right if they were right and they believe that conditions impair their ability to teach and they achieve the correction of those conditions so that they were able to teach more effectively then the students will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

AS: This is one place where Terry and I, I am afraid, will disagree because I contend that in any strike, children are the main losers in this process.

JM: Why?

AS: Just because I think it disrupts the school system, it puts the adversarial position of the parties not only at the bargaining table but in the classroom and within the community and I think it is a bad image for children, but collective bargaining is here. I can't see anything like it is going to go away because it isn't but nevertheless I think children are the losers in this process.

WB: Terry Herndon said that public reaction to a teacher strike is often "A Pox on both your Houses." We would like to find out how NPR's portion of the public feels about strikes. So we have a question for you. We will describe a situation, give you three possible courses of action, and ask you to choose one of the three. Then let us know your choice, so that we can report the results. If your pencil is ready now, here's John with the situation.

JM: OK, it goes like this. Teachers have been negotiating to correct unacceptable working conditions. The Negotiations including mediation, have failed to break the impasse. Should the teachers 1) strike; 2) work-to-rule; which means to refuse to perform all extra duties not in the contract, like coaching, after-school meetings, coaching, PTA meetings, tutoring, and so forth, or (choice number 3) accept the working conditions as they are? Let me give the situation again, and the three responses (repeat)

WB: Drop us your choice, (drop us a post card so that two weeks from now we will report back to you. Here's the address: Options in Education, 2025 M (as in mustard) Street, northwest, Washington, D.C. The zip code is 20036.

(button)

(noise from the conference fade)

WB: That's one participant at this year's national free university conference, held at the University for Man in Manhattan, Kansas, at the end of October. What's a free university? Well, it's hard to generalize, but most sprang up as alternatives to traditional university curricula. That leaves a lot of room, for both creativity and anarchy. The free universities began in earnest in the 1960s, at the time of the free speech movement in Berkeley, California, and by the late 60s there were 300 of them. Today there are about 100, of which 40 were represented at the three day conference. We asked Lonna Naegel of public station KSAC to go to the conference, and she filed this report.

LN: The conference was billed as an opportunity to explore the potential growth and direction of the free university movement with a look at operational problems. The forum was coordinated by Sue Mace, the director for the University for Man in Manhattan, Kansas, one of the few free universities which has encountered continuous success

and growth while others have failed. Mace says the conference was held in Manhattan because UFM is committed to growth and could see the need for a meeting ground where new visions and old problems could be discussed and she says there was a definite attraction which brough 150 persons from 40 free U's across the nation to Manhattan.

WOMAN: One of the panels we are going to have is going to be looking at the university without walls, campus, free college, styles of learning, how people might set up their own programs of learning. How can the free university be part of the new trend in nontraditional education. How can we take the course that we think are equally as exciting as what you might learn at the university and help a person include that in their documentation of learning. Jobs now aren't as common. If you have a degree, a bachelor's in history, you just don't get a job. That may be by supplementing it with work that you have done through the free university, how can you help people document their work, where maybe the free university has never been seen as that strong of a learning experience. We very much believe that if people really looked at the learning that happened in a free U class as equal to what happens in the university class they would have some good things to put on their records, so it is just a heightening thing. I think if anyone goes to a conference you come back with new ideas and you need a recharge every year.

LN: The three-day program focused on three major areas including new directions which free universities can take in the future, a look at staff relations and the variety of learners that are encountered. And finally the technical aspects, such as financial support, publicity and legal hang-ups. Among the more notable persons in attendance was Jane Lichtman, author of Bring your own Bag and Report on Free Universities. She is also a representative of NEXIS a clearing house for alturnative education in Washington, D.C. Lichtman says the greatest progress which free U's has made is their defining of roles within the community and it is serving those persons who have long been ignored by traditional users of higher education, because of finances, grades or credentials. Lichtman is also quick to point out the inadequacies of free universities which she has observed.

JL: Administrative ineptness. We tend to let people down by having a feeling that people ought to be free to do what they want to do when they want to do it, which means as an example was mentioned tonight, somebody who doesn't know anything, we allow them to teach. To me there is some kind of boundary line between our responsibility toward our students and also our responsibility to keep the free university open to somebody who really has something to contribute to the students. And I think that because we have been unsure of how to evaluate that. We have often let the students down because we had people organizing meetings and organizing groups who really didn't have the commitment to their students and to the program. The other kind of, oh, I guess disappointment that I have had about free universities has just been the whole kind of antiorganizational stance that we have taken. We have not been able to get a national free university network going. I am not all that convinced as others are that this is so important. I really don't think it is. But that carries over into our own organizing at the local level. We tend not to be in when telephones ring, we tend not to have office hours so people can;t get hold of us. We are often unreliable. We don't follow through with the letters we promised or meeting the deadlines for the brochures that need to go to the printer and I think that has been a real problem with the free universities. And only with a couple of them do I see real changes being made, that they have developed some kinds of skills in managing their program.

LN: Also in attendance was Mark Rosenman of the Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Rosenman has long been associated with University Without Walls which calls for a student self-direction in education, while providing a degree for the work completed. Somewhat of a compromise between the traditional forms of higher education and free universities. However, Rosenman says he expects to find an in crease in the number of all three educational modes.

As for free universities themselves, Rosenman responds to a question on what it takes to make them successful.

MR: It all depends by what criteria one is judging success. If one is judging it simply in terms of the number of folks involved per hours of course work, or equivalency, then they simply have to build their base in the involvement in the community, a significant number of folks from different avenues and that is relatively easy to do. If it is success in terms of that broad political perspective I was referring to a moment ago then the question is going to be, what is their role in terms of facilitating individual growth and the development of a kind of critical consciousness among its students, to begin to take significant -- to take a view of society from significantly different kinds of ground than most of the folks in this world do.

LN: The conference was labled as a success by those attending and commitments have been made to meet regionally in the spring before next year's National Free U's Conference. For Options in Education, this is Lonna Naegel in Manhattan, Kansas.

(nagle tape)

WB: Incidentally, the "FREE" in the name doesn't necessarily mean free as in "NO MONEY", at least not anymore. Nearly half now charge registration fees, and some have modest tuition. Want to know if there is a free university near you? Look in non-traditional places, we were advised. The cop on the corner probably won't know, and the university administration probably won't tell. So ask around, look in alternative newspapers, and, if that fails, write to the university for man in manhattan, kansas.

(button: sit still)

WB: Disruptive kids have always been problems for teachers, schools and parents. Methods of control vary from decade to decade, from court decision to court decision. But if Peter Schrag and Diane Divoky (long O) are correct, there is a frightening trend toward drugging large numbers of school kids, who are first labelled hyperactive and then put on drugs----legally. Susan Stamberg of NPR's All Things Considered and John Merrow talked with co-author Schrag.

SS: You are essentially saying that somewhere between half a million and one million children in this country are having their behavior control scientifically, they are being screened, they are being diagnosed, labled and then treated with various forms of drugs or behavioral therapy. To turn around behavior which somebody out there has determined is socially unacceptable. Is that a pretty good suscinct description of your major points?

PS: Yes, it is with one exception. That is, it is between a half million and a million kids are being drugged but there are millions of others who are being subject to the screening and to the labeling, are being called hyperactive, minimally brain dysfunction, whatever. In addition to that half million or a million so the number there is substantial.

JM: Peter, can we push you on the terminology of Hyperactivity? You call your book the Myth of the Hyperactive child and yet hyperactivity is a real phenomenon. There is something called hyperkinesis.

PS: Yes, there is.

JM: What is it?

PS: Well, in its simplest terms it is simply an individual, usually a child, who simply is so wired that you can't keep him off the chandelier. I mean, and presumably that is sort of at the extreme of a continuum. I mean nobody knows. But because that syndrom was identified years ago, and there are some neurological tests and so on to demonstrate that -- because of that, miliions of other kids are now being labeled Hyperactive who are simply

disturbing to some adult because they are figity or they don't sit still or because they have what is called a short attention span, or for dozens of other reasons, actually scores of other reasons. And so that suddenly rather than having a very small percentage of the population, maybe one in 2,000 who are generally hyperkenitic and have to be dealt with in special ways, we suddenly have estimates that run from 15 to 40 per cent of kids who are hyperkinetic or hyperactive or learning disabled or any of these labels.

SS: Who is doing the labeling?

PS: Who does the labeling? Any number of sources. Teachers, parents, pediatricians, clinics. Again usually, and most commonly on the basis of some kind of behavior somebody doen't like. It may be apparent who takes a child to a doctor and says: This kid is too jumpy, and increasingly and in very many cases it is a school saying to a parent or sending a note home from the nurse, the teacher or who ever: Your child can't sit still, he may be hyperactive, or Your child is hyperactive. Please see a doctor and in some cases avertedly saying: Your child is hyperactive, you might try drugs. And in terms of the socioeconomic group they tend to be primarily middle class. So with those labels, you see what happens is that black kids or poor kids more often get what are now the more stigmatizing labels, what the middle class regards as the more stigmatizing labels like Mentally Retarded or something like that. In a way, the same kind of behavior on the part of one child can get him labeled Mentally Retarded whereas if the child from a different socioeconomic group or a different race, he will be labeled Learning Disabled.

JM: You are saying there is a real difference in the stigma attached to those two terms?

PS: Well, I think the middle class thinks that hyperactive, or learning disabled is not a very fashionable kind of label and it explains a lot of things or seems to satisfy those people, whereas Mentally Regarded has become something that is not fashionable and that is embarrassing to people.

SS: Well, on the subject of fasionableness, why do we see so much attention being paid to the hyperkinetic kid, the hyperactive kid, the kid with learning disabilities. In these let's say the last five years, it is the phenomenon of the 70's.

PS: Oh, yes, it is clearly the phenomenon of the 70's.

SS: How come?

PS: In the 60's, the emphasis -- we can go back further historically, but let's just start with the 60's. In the 60's the emphasis, or the explanation of school failure, or whatever kind of failure was put on the schools and what the schools did or didn't do and the remedies were school reform, new programs, new compensatory education, all of these things. As the faith in those things and the money for those things began to decline, the emphasis was put back on the kids. It was now again something that was wrong with the kid. But not the way it used to be 40 years ago where people said the kid is stupid, lazy, shiftless, comes from a terrible family and so on. Because all of those things are now considered, again, by conventional wisdom, invidious racist, whatever. Now -- and here again, this is what is the fashion. We say: Well, it is not the kid's fault, it is not the parents' fault. Certainly they have tried their best, everybody has tried their best. It is something in the kid's cortico miswiring, genetic defense.

SS: It is a physical problem?

PS: Somewhere in there the circuits have become crossed.

SS: That takes the onus off everybody.

PS: Takes the onus off everybody and brings in -- and this is the other thing. We have become very much a social service minded kind of society. And that social service is laid on top of a kind of traditional American perfectionism. The idea of creating the new man, the new Adam. You know, that goes back for 300 years. But now we are going to create -- you know the time to really do this is in childhood. Right? In the invention. Get it early. And children there has been a fair amount learned about the fact that those early years of development are very crucial. I don't think there is any question about that. So the emphasis gets put, for all those reasons, on this apparently nonstigmatizing or theoretically nonstigmatizing to the family at least, set of designations. Well, this is just one of those things. Again, when there were psychological explanations in the 60's: The kid is neurotic, his father is too pushy -- who knows? Those always are again reflected on the parents. But here we are talking about something that is just miswiring. Nobody is guilty. Right?

SS: There is a very interesting point that you make, speculation in a way, as to why, now, why in the 70's, and you say: Look at who the parents of the kids of the 70's are. They were the children of the 50's. They lived in a time when conformity was the rule. And this gets to much of the basic part of what your book is about.

PS: This is true.

SS: Don't be different. Be normal. Be like everybody else. Now these parents in a way are doing that same number on their children, but to your likes in far more dangerous ways.

PS: I think that is right, because now there is the appearance of a technology that is harmless, or the appearance of techniques that are harmless and that are beneficial and that are going to make people happy.

SS: Just what do you do on the human level, you know, legal issues, medical issues aside. You have got the parent coming into a school being driven crazy at home by the figity, twitchy kid, being told exactly the same sort of perceptions on the part of the so-called experts, the people you turn your children over to for God's sake, you know, from nine to three, all day, they have got to be in a way professionals, they have got to know what they are doing, and there comes parent who is victim, and victimized in a situation like this. What in the world do you do?

PS: And the matter is worse because many parents justly feel their kid is kind of a hostage to the system. Do you resist? They are going to take it out on your kid.

SS: How do they know enough to resist?

PS: I think the one thing you do is read this book.

JM: You do seem to be saying, though, that parents ought to be walking into their schools more and asking questions about what is going on.

PS: And asking questions and looking at those records and looking at those labels and asking what those tests are for, and questioning what the validation is of the screens and the psychological measures, and all those questionnaires that parents fill out when they take their kids to school. And there is no end to this thing.

SS: It is like a snowball.

PS: Right.

JM: And you go so far as to say that what we are watching, we are seeing science abolish the Constitution. Are you really that fearful?

PS: I am not accusing science. I guess what we are saying is that the way it is used, the way it is interpreted. It seems to me the problem with a lot of this hyperactivity and drug research is that it is not good science, and that even where it is, it is misinterpreted in many cases. So I don't think we are saying: Well, look at the fix science has put us in. I don't think it is science. I think it is the guys out there who are peddling their wares, who are doing it in the name of science. They are the ones who are giving science a bad name.

WB: Peter Schrag is co-author of The Myth of Hyperactivity, a new book. Published by Random House, we'll hear more from Peter Schrag about drugging hyperactive kids -- on next week's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

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I'm Wendy Blair. Join us next week for Options in Education.

(music)

KM: This is NPR, national PUBLIC radio.

We have omitted the weekly news from this transcript. In its place we are listing references which you might find useful and interesting.

Ben F. Feingold, M.D., Why Your Child is Hyperactive, Random House, New York, 1975

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